Using Archion for German Research

Germany "How to" Guide, Beginner Level: Instruction

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GOAL

This guide will teach you how to determine (before registering) whether Archion contains records from a specific parish, how to register with Archion, and how to begin viewing the records available at the website.

INTRODUCTION

Archion is a collaboration of most Evangelical church archives in Germany, with the goal of publishing their records digitally online. This means that Archion focuses on making Protestant records available. Most of the archive collections are only partially available. Newly digitized parish registers are added almost daily. The website is not affiliated with FamilySearch, and a paid subscription is required to access the images. In some areas, "index only" collections available on Ancestry.com can be used in conjunction with the images found on Archion.

HOW TO

Select your desired language from the top navigation bar: DE for German, or EN for English. For introductory information about the Archion website, click on the "Discover Archion" ("*Archion entdecken*") tab; if you don't see the tab, click on the three horizontal lines found on the top right of the page and select "Discover Archion." Click on "First Steps" ("*Erste Schritte*") from the drop-down options.

Finding the parish records

The church records on Archion are organized by parish name and church district/deanery (*Kirchenkreis*/*Dekanat*). The church district or deanery is a larger location in which a parish is found and is helpful when needing to distinguish between multiple parishes with the same name. If you need to determine the parish for your locality, a helpful resource is the website www.meyersgaz.org. To learn how to use this website, check out the Meyer's Gazetteer "How To" Guide.

Before creating an Archion account, search archion.de to see if your parish records are digitally available on the website.

There are two ways to identify parish records on Archion:
Search

To use the search parish option:
1. In the left corner of the top navigation bar, click on "Location Search" ("*Ortssuche*") by the magnifying glass. The search screen will appear.

2. Type the name of your parish into the "Churchbooks" ("*Kirchenbücher*") field. Typing in the name of the parish brings up a list of possible matches, each consisting of two lines: The overarching, black line is the name of the archive, which you may need to scroll to see; the green line is the name of the parish, preceded by the name of the church district/deanery where the parish is found.

3. Do one of the following.
   a. Click on the parish name of interest to automatically fill in the "Churchbooks" field with the needed information. Look for listings containing the exact letter combination you have typed; the letters will be in orange.
   b. Or scroll down to the end of the place options and click on "Search all about" ("*Suche alles zu*"), which will be followed by the letter combination you have typed.

Note: If the place name in the "Churchbooks" ("*Kirchenbücher*") field only contains one name, rather than the name of the church district/deanery followed by the > sign and the name of the parish, you have selected the church district/deanery rather than the parish. A church district/deanery search will yield a list of results from all the parishes within the district.

4. If you wish to narrow your search by a year range, type beginning and ending years into the two small white boxes.

5. If you wish to narrow your search by record type, click on "show" ("*einblenden*") on the bottom line of the search bar and select all record types of interest, including "Other" ("*Sonstige*") because some books containing your needed record types may be labeled in alternate ways.

6. Click on the green "Search Churchbooks" ("*Kirchenbücher suchen*") button to get a list of all records for the selected parish (or parishes, if you selected "Search all about").

7. Your search results will include church records that have been inventoried but are not digitally available; rather than having a blue bar to the left of the listing and the green words "Show digital copy in viewer" ("*Digitalisat im Viewer anzeigen*") under the book title, the listing will have a gray bar and the gray words "No digitized material available" ("*Keine verfügbaren Digitalisate*"). If you wish to only view digitally available records, check the box in the search bar labeled "Show only digitally available hits" ("*Nur digital verfügbare Treffer anzeigen*").

8. To view the digital images in a specific book, do one of the following.
   a. Click on "Show digital copy in viewer" under a book title of interest to go directly to the digitized images if already signed in with an active subscription.
   b. Click on "Detail page" ("*Detailseite*") under a book title of interest to view potentially helpful information about the book, such as the layout of its contents. Then click on the white "Display Digital Copy (Viewer)" ("*Digitalisat anzeigen [Viewer]*") button to view the digitized images if already signed in with an active subscription.

9. There are no searchable name indexes on Archion, so the images will need to be browsed page by page unless a searchable index is located on another website. Some parishes contain handwritten name indexes on Archion for certain years and record types.

Browse

To use the browse parish option:
1. In the left corner of the dark navigation bar, click on "All Archives" ("*Alle Archive*").

2. A list of all participating archives will appear in the left column, organized by federal state. Click on the archive, where the church records of interest are found.

3. The list of archives on the left will be replaced with a list of church districts/deaneries found within the selected archive.

4. Click on the church district/deanery where the church is found.

5. The list of church districts/deaneries will be replaced with a list of parishes. Click on the desired parish, and another list will appear showing all available church records for that parish. At each of the levels (archive, church district/deanery, parish, and book), items with at least one digitized book associated with it will have a green button. If a parish or other listing instead has a white button, no records are available online but that at least one parish register is listed in the inventory.

Common abbreviations on Archion

KB = Kirchenbuch (symbol: book)	Church books with multiple record types
T = Taufen (symbol: three wavy lines)	Baptisms
TR = Trauungen (symbol: two interlocking rings)	Marriages
B = Bestattungen (symbol: hourglass)	Burials
Konf = Konfirmationen (symbol: hand)	Confirmations
Reg = Register (symbol: varies)	Index

Creating an account

With the language set to "English," all the information needed for creating an Archion account, choosing a subscription, and payment are available in English. It is important to check the boxes stating that you accept the current data protection provisions and terms and conditions. The legal text of these conditions is only available in German. You can use an online translation tool such as www.translate.google.com to translate them.

Subscriptions

Several options are available for subscriptions to Archion. To find the descriptions of these options, click on the "Buy Access" ("Zugang kaufen") button at the top right (if you don't see the button, click on the three lines and then select "Buy Access"). The following list of subscriptions are available:

- 1- month-pass for 19.90 Euro. This subscription provides image access for 30 days from the date of the subscription and allows up to 50 downloads.

- 3- month-pass for 52.20 Euro. This pass provides image access for 90 days starting from the date of the subscription and allows for up to 150 downloads.

- 1-year-pass for 178.80 Euro (14.90 Euro per month). This subscription provides image access for 365 days from the date of the subscription and allows for up to 600 downloads.

The subscriptions do not automatically renew. Once payment has been made, it may take some time before the account is activated and you are able to view images. Booking a new subscription is only possible after the current one has expired.

PRACTICE

The records from the parish of Dippach are available for free on Archion so you can test out how the website works before subscribing.

Let's practice finding a record on Archion. We will identify the marriage record of Konrad Frieschmann and Anna Sabina Lengemann, who were married in Dippach in May 1925.

1. Go to www.archion.de
2. Click on EN on the top right to change the language to English.
3. Click on "Location Search"
4. In the "Churchbooks" search field, type "Dippach" and select Dippach.
   - Only one location listing contains exactly "Dippach" and is orange. It is the one labeled "Kirchenkreis Eisenach-Gerstungen > Dippach."
5. Click on the green "Search Churchbooks" button.
6. You will see a list of 10 books. All of them have a blue bar on the left and words indicating they are digitally available. They are not necessarily listed in chronological order. Note that the book descriptions are in German even though you are viewing the website in English. Using the keyword list below will help in identifying the record type. In this case:
   - *Kirchenbuch* = church book (books with this label typically include baptisms, marriages, and burials)
   - *Taufen* = baptisms
   - *Konfirmanden* = confirmands (books with this label contain confirmations)
   - *Trauungen* = marriages
   - *Eheprotokolle* = marriage protocols
   - *Beerdigungen* = burials

The book "Trauungen 1866-1934 should contain the record we need. Click on "Show digital copy in viewer" under the book title; alternatively, click "Detail page" to first view additional information, then select "Display Digital Copy (Viewer)."

On the left side, you can scroll through the different pages in the marriage book. It is not possible to type in page numbers; however, you can select the page number from the dropdown at the top of the list of images. The current image will be shown on the right.

The light blue bar on the bottom left allows you to choose between six levels of magnification. Other options include turning the image left or right and adjusting brightness and contrast. To see more of an image, you can hide the main header by clicking on the green "View in full screen" button on the top right and hide the thumbnails by clicking on the square icon directly left of the green button.

The symbols below the main header on the top of the right-hand side are used to see information about the book (i), send feedback, download the image (down arrow), bookmark the page, and create a permalink to a certain page (link/chains symbol).

Next, scroll through the list of images, periodically checking pages for the year. After finding the year 1925, use the arrows next to the image number to page through the year until the May 1925 marriage of Konrad Frieschmann and Anna Sabina Lengemann has been found. The marriage records in this book span both pages.

Once the record has been found, if you are signed in with an active subscription you can click on the link/chains symbol on the top right and create a permalink that will take any user with an active Archion subscription directly to that same page.

ACTIVITY

Now, test the skills you have learned in this "How to" Guide by completing the activity to check your knowledge and let you know you've mastered the Guide! Click here to try out the Activity.